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OF THE 16th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 10 May 1995, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. ALSTON

later: Mr. CEAUSU
later: Mr. ALSTON

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* The summary record of the second part (closed) of the meeting appears as document E/C.12/1995/SR.16/Add.1.

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GE.95-16496 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 6) (continued)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT

Sweden (continued) (E/1994/104/Add.1; E/C.12/1994/WP.18)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Lindholm and Mr. Lagergren (Sweden) resumed their places at the Committee table.

2. The CHAIRPERSON invited the representative of Sweden to reply to issues Nos. 27 to 33 of the list of issues (E/C.12/1994/WP.18), relating to article 11.

3. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden) said that the number of people below the poverty line had regrettably increased owing to the economic situation in Sweden. The estimate for 1995 was 8.3 per cent of the population; by contrast it had stood at 7 per cent in 1990, as shown in paragraph 169 of the report (E/1994/104/Add.1). Regarding issue No. 28, the financial resources used by municipal authorities derived from the tax revenues they themselves raised.

4. With regard to issue No. 29, he said that most of the trends listed in paragraph 176 of the report were continuing in the same direction, with some exceptions. Real incomes had started to increase in the mid-1980s, although that increase had subsequently slowed down. The standard of living had continued to rise, but more slowly. Income differences were still small in an international perspective, but had increased slightly over the previous 10 years. Class differences had remained essentially the same. Thus, for example, in health there were still substantial class differences. There had been a drastic deterioration in the employment situation. Unemployment had increased to 14 per cent in 1994, a figure that included those engaged in labour market programmes. The number of people outside the labour market had increased as well. Exposure to violence and theft had also increased.

5. Mr. Ceausu took the Chair.

6. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden), responding to issue No. 30, said that the trend towards increasing generational differences continued. Older people - those aged 61-75 - were better off than the same age group 25 years earlier in terms of economic resources, health and leisure. Meanwhile, the situation for people aged 18 to 29 had become worse in some respects. They did not enjoy better living standards than the same age group 10 years earlier. One reason for the improved situation of the former group was the ATP (general supplementary) pension system. As more pensioners acquired full pension rights according to the rules of the system, the average income level of younger pensioners increased. The situation of those over 80, who had an incomplete ATP or none at all, was unchanged. The income differences among pensioners were exacerbated by the tendency towards increased charges for home help and other services provided by local authorities, which naturally affected the oldest most. The younger generation had been badly affected by the extremely rapid increase in unemployment, which hit particularly at those

with a low educational level, those living in rural areas or those with an immigrant background. Their difficult situation was compounded by the developments in the housing market, with the very high real interest rates and decreased housing subsidies. The Government's programme to reduce the State budget deficit implied reductions in benefits and increased taxation that would affect households at all income levels and in all age groups. The programme had been especially evaluated in order to ensure that the effects would be distributed equitably.

7. On issue No. 31, he said that there were no later data available on the situation of less privileged groups, such as refugees, immigrants, single parents and families with young children. There was, however, reason to believe that their situation had deteriorated over the previous three years, since they were particularly vulnerable to the current employment crisis. The total amount paid in social assistance had increased substantially over the past few years: it had risen in real terms by 57.5 per cent between 1990 and 1993, or about 12 per cent a year. A large part of such assistance was received by immigrants and refugees. Only 40 per cent of non-Nordic citizens were in gainful employment.

8. Turning to issue No. 32, he said that the new Act concerning Support and Services for Persons with Certain Functional Impairments was a special law on rights which, when necessary, supplemented other legislation regarding expert support, services, personal assistance, etc. It gave people with severe functional disabilities the legal right to 10 different kinds of support and service. It also obliged municipalities to take over care for the mentally disabled from county councils before 1996. Based on respect for the independence and integrity of the individual, the Act comprised the following rights: advice and personal support from experts; personal assistance, which would be paid for by the municipality if required for less than 20 hours a week, but where more than 20 hours was required State assistance benefit would be provided, financed by the social insurance office; the provision of an escort service; the provision of a contact person; relief service in the home; short-term stays away from home; short-time minding of school children over 12, especially in school holidays; arrangements for foster care and special housing for children and young people, complementary to the parental home; special housing for adults; and the provision of daily activities. A Disability Ombudsman, whose work was to be governed by the United Nations Standard Rules, had been appointed in July 1994.

9. With regard to issue No. 33, he said that there was no special programme of housing construction for less privileged groups. Housing allowances were paid to households with a low income in order to increase the housing standard, diminish overcrowding and generally strengthen the economic situation of poor households. Responsibility for support rested with the municipal authorities. Immigration was usually a factor taken into account by municipalities in planning housing production. As a result most refugees with residence or work permits could get a flat with the right of tenancy relatively quickly, although there were some difficulties in big cities and university towns. In those cases there were special arrangements for applicants to be granted reception flats while they waited for a flat of their own. Sweden had, however, always favoured a general expansion of the housing supply rather than special housing programmes for individual groups.

10. Mr. SIMMA asked, in relation to issue No. 31, whether within the altogether laudable 57.5 per cent rise in the social assistance paid there had been any cuts in benefits to individuals. Secondly, he noted that according to information supplied by Sweden a single worker earning SKr 118,560 had scope for consumption above the standard recommended by the National Bureau of Health and Welfare. The Committee had been taken aback by the notion of a standard recommended by the Government, which sounded paternalistic. He asked what the impact or relevance of such standards was. Thirdly, he noted that the Swedish national debt must have a negative impact on housing. It seemed that the high costs prevented many people from buying or building houses. The situation was, however, aggravated by Sweden's apparent lack of a long-term housing policy. Fourthly, he asked whether in Sweden as elsewhere segregation was a growing problem. Lastly, he noted that evictions were running at the rate of about 10,000 a year, whereas previously municipalities had stepped in to pay overdue rent or carry out repairs, if such action was necessary. He presumed that the change of policy was because municipalities were short of money.

11. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked, in connection with paragraph 210 of the report, what kind of assistance was paid to low-income families and to retired people, and in what amount. She wondered if foreigners were eligible, too.

12. Mr. LAGERGREN (Sweden) said, in reply to Mr. Simma's second question, that norms were issued by the National Bureau of Health and Welfare on the basis of the figures which were also those used to calculate all forms of benefit. Whether such a recommendation was paternalistic or not, he could not comment, but he pointed out that they were intended for the guidance not of individuals, but of municipalities, who were responsible for paying social assistance. In practice, since the cost of living varied around the country, some municipalities disagreed with the concept of a national norm. Indeed, some were anxious to transfer responsibility for paying social assistance to national government, but the Government had not acceded to that. He added that social assistance was paid only in money, not in kind; and that it was open to a receiver of social benefits to challenge the size of benefit before the courts, which sometimes fixed a higher level than that paid by the municipality. There were many rules governing the receipt of social assistance, for which application had to be made. For example, an applicant had to accept work if it was offered; he had to work full-time and, if working part-time but offered full-time work, he was obliged to accept it. It remained the case, however, that municipalities were obliged to provide for people who could not provide for themselves. There were no special rules relating to foreigners; indeed there were probably more foreigners than Swedes taking up social assistance. A growing number of immigrants relied on social assistance. In addition, there were special arrangements for refugees during their first two years in the country. The current economic pressures meant that changes were likely to take place with regard to social assistance, although no cuts had so far been made. Social assistance payments would be compared with normal income levels and probably brought down to make them compatible with each other. One change had already been made: social assistance would not rise in line with the full consumer price index, but only to 60 per cent of it. The difference would, however, be small, since inflation was low.

13. With regard to housing, he said that the criteria for housing allowances were complicated. Basically, they were predicated on the size of an applicant's income and the amount of rent to be paid. He agreed that there was little new housing, owing to high interest rates and the growing costs of building. He pointed out, however, that prior to 1990 the situation had been extremely favourable, so that the current situation was merely an adjustment to more normal conditions. There had been much building in the 1980s thanks to a system of subsidies and Sweden was currently suffering the reverse side of that process. As far as he knew, the country had no long-term housing strategy.

14. With regard to segregation, he said that it was far more marked than it had been 30 or 40 years ago; the symptoms included the number of immigrants, the number of people on the poverty line, the number of those on social assistance and the lower levels of education. It was a significant problem and in recognition of that a special committee had been set up, which was seeking solutions. Lastly, he agreed that the number of evictions had increased. Municipalities owned a lot of the apartments concerned, so when they were hard pressed financially their policy was liable to be tougher. It was not a very large problem, except for those directly affected.

15. Mr. RATTRAY, noting that housing allowance was paid on the basis of income and rent, said that by definition homeless people did not pay rent. He therefore wanted to know how the allowance was fixed for them or what strategy existed for housing for homeless.

16. Mr. LAGERGREN (Sweden) agreed that housing allowance went to those with houses. Homeless people, who often had social or alcohol-related problems, were the responsibility of the social services. They were also helped by voluntary organizations.

17. The CHAIRPERSON invited the representative of Sweden to reply to issues Nos. 34 to 38 of the list of issues, relating to article 12.

18. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden) said that the document mentioned in paragraph 212 of the report was Sweden's follow-up of the World Health Organization's European health targets, "The European Health for All Strategy". It concerned Swedish health development in 1993-1994 in relation to the 38 comprehensive European health targets. That development was difficult to summarize. The targets were to achieve more equality in health and action on smoking, alcohol, drugs, reduction of air and water pollution, suitable primary care, research and development, evaluation, education and other matters. Sweden would deal with the question more thoroughly in its next report.

19. With regard to issue No. 35, he said that the answer to the question depended on how "ill-health" was defined. There had been no major changes between 1981 and 1991 for people between 16 and 84 who had been ill for a long period. More blue-collar workers were ill for long periods than white-collar workers. Mobility had improved for all groups. The number of people with a greatly reduced working capacity had increased among both male and female workers. The number of men and women who considered their health to be bad had decreased; blue-collar workers were more likely to have that opinion. The health of both men and women had improved somewhat over the period 1975-1990.

There had, however, been a decrease in the number of years for which younger women (aged 16-64) had enjoyed full health during that period. The data on the topic were recent and research concerning the causes had barely started. A tentative explanation could be found in women's changed way of living: women reportedly smoked and drank alcohol to a greater extent than before. Another factor might be the increased pressure on women to combine family, work and children.

20. With regard to issue No. 36, he said that since Sweden's ratification of the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161), four reports on the application of the Convention had been submitted to the International Labour Organization (ILO) describing the current situation. The latest report was appended to Sweden's report to the Committee. Three reports on the application of the Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162), had been submitted to the ILO following the ratification of the Convention in 1987. The first report gave an account of the relevant legislation and of the ordinances issued by the National Board of Occupational Safety and Health. The other two reports described new regulations in relation to the handling of asbestos at work. The three reports were appended to Sweden's report to the Committee.

21. With regard to issue No. 37, he said that Sweden had taken strong preventive measures ever since the first cases of HIV infection had been discovered, including widely publicized information to counteract prejudices about AIDS. Under the Swedish Constitution, human rights and fundamental freedoms applied to all citizens and there were no exceptions for persons infected with the HIV virus. Some regulations aimed specifically to prevent discriminatory treatment: doctors were required to treat all infectious diseases, including AIDS, and the National Board of Health and Welfare had stipulated hygiene routines to be observed in the dental treatment of patients with infectious diseases. There were just under 4,000 HIV cases in Sweden.

22. As to issue No. 38 and the impact of rising health costs on full medical treatment of the elderly, Swedish medical care was based on the principle of treatment according to need, and there were no criteria implying that priority should be given to certain patient groups over others. If medical expenditure for the elderly were to rise, the increased costs would be offset through rationalization of procedures rather than reduction in their treatment.

23. Mr. SIMMA asked how Sweden was coping with the skyrocketing costs of high-technology medicine, which most countries were finding impossible to meet, so that in some cases, such as the United States, it had been found necessary to ration its use, thus making choices that amounted to death sentences.

24. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked whether Sweden had found it necessary to make health cuts in the budget and where such cuts had been made - for instance, in the provision of medicine and treatment or, in particular, in preventive medicine. Also, she would like to know the total number of suicides each year and the proportion of the total mortality they represented.

25. Mr. ADEKOUYE, noting the delegation's frankness in acknowledging the problem of alcoholism in Sweden, said that he would like information on the

Government's plans for dealing with the problem, which undoubtedly, stemmed in part from frustration over the economic conditions and the declining quality of life.

26. Mr. LAGERGREN (Sweden) explained that Sweden had been fairly successful in curbing health expenditure generally since 1980, and it had actually fallen from 9.5 to 7.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), although some of that decline was attributable to shifts of certain health-care items to other parts of the budget. Especially since 1990, there had been productivity gains in the health-care sector which some had found astonishing, but which he felt had been due to an earlier slack in business procedures and a lack of pressure to decrease health-care costs. Of course, Sweden would in the future have to face choices in the use of high-technology medicine, especially where the elderly were concerned. A recent Commission of Inquiry into Medical Priorities had debated just that issue, and had established a list of priorities, with life-threatening diseases and quality of life problems at the top of the list, and more "cosmetic" problems like in vitro fertilization at the bottom of the list. Thus far, however, a combination of decentralization and financial control had worked well. Before, local authorities had had the power to increase taxes to finance health care, but the national Government no longer allowed that, although the county councils still had a great deal of freedom to introduce new medical methods, approaches and techniques.

27. Cost-control mechanisms were functioning in Sweden, although some rationing of services had of course been needed, in the form particularly of shorter average hospital stays and more procedures done on an out-patient or home-care basis. There had been no cuts in preventive medicine, and even though its cost-efficiency was being debated, the Government believed in it. The use of homeopathic medicine was also a matter of debate, but Social Security did cover doctors' fees in the few instances in which doctors prescribed it, although the cost of the medicines themselves was not covered.

28. There were approximately 1,600 suicides per year in Sweden out of approximately 100,000 deaths. The overall rate of suicide was not increasing, but there were now more suicides by older people. The problem was not a major one in Sweden. Regarding alcoholism and the effects of the economic crisis on health, the impact went in both directions: when less money was available, less money was spent on alcohol and, in fact, alcoholism decline in proportion to income levels. There had been no recent rise in alcohol-related disease, but the economic recession had had a health impact, more noticeable in women than in men and in the unemployed than in those with jobs. The Government's main thrust in that area was to provide information and seek to inculcate good habits. Sweden was particularly disturbed that by joining the European Union it might lose control over the alcohol problem, because it would not be allowed to keep its high taxes on the Government-monopoly sale of alcohol, a policy which it had found very effective in curbing alcoholism.

29. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden) added that, while it was true that Sweden would not be allowed to keep its monopoly on the production and import of alcohol, it had reached an agreement with the European Union allowing it to retain its monopoly on distribution, to which challenges could be brought only in the European Court.

30. The CHAIRPERSON invited the delegation to take up issues Nos. 39 to 46 of the list of issues, relating to article 13 of the Covenant.

31. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden) said, regarding the impact of the recent educational reform (report, paras. 243-247) on the cost of education, that education was still in principle free of charge, from the nine years of compulsory primary schooling through the university level, with some minor exceptions. Private primary schools, for instance, which were attended by some 1.5 per cent of the population, were allowed to charge low fees, although many did not, since 85 per cent of their expenses were municipally funded. Public expenditure for education in Sweden had decreased somewhat in recent years, in part because of legislative cuts and in part because of larger class size to accommodate an increased number of pupils. It was still too early, however, to assess the impact of the reform on costs.

32. With regard to issue No. 41 concerning students grants, the maximum nine-month study allowance for a full-time student was approximately SKr 62,000 (about SKr 17,000 in the form of a grant and SKr 45,000 in the form of a loan), and a student could earn a maximum of SKr 44,000 without having his allowance reduced. To set those figures in the context of the cost of living, it should be noted that the 12-month welfare allowance for a single adult ranged from SKr 83,000 to a maximum of SKr 101,000.

33. Issue No. 42 regarding religious education and the teaching of human rights had already been addressed at the previous meeting. To respond to issue No. 43, certain representative figures could be given for monthly salaries of schools and university teachers as compared with those of other State employees. Monthly teachers' salaries ranged from approximately SKr 13,000 for preschool teachers, to less than SKr 17,000 for primary schoolteachers, to between approximately SKr 18,000 and SKr 23,000 for secondary schoolteachers. University salaries ranged from about SKr 20,000 to about SKr 32,000 for full professors. By comparison, civil servants in general earned SKr 16,300 per month, county council employees earned SKr 16,000, and municipal employees earned approximately SKr 15,000.

34. Regarding issue No. 44 and the number of immigrants studying the Swedish language (report, para. 292), approximately 41,500 immigrant students had studied Swedish during the 1992/93 school year, an increase of approximately 1,600 over the 1991/92 school year. The most frequent home language was Arabic (20 per cent), followed by Persian (10 per cent).

35. As to issue No. 45 concerning the provisions of the new educational legislation (report, para. 295) and its impact on teaching standards, he said that there was nothing to indicate that the quality of education had declined. A study was under way to monitor the consequences of the educational reform, on which resource allocation would be based, and a report would be presented to the Government before 1 March 1996.

36. With reference to issue No. 46 and the access of the elderly to education, there were financial incentives, rules for leave of absence from work for studies and a flexible organization of studies. Formal adult education and higher education were free of charge, and it was a fundamental principle of municipal and national adult education that no one should be

prevented from studying for lack of funds and that individuals with the least education should receive grants in order to upgrade their qualifications for work. The unemployed or those at risk of becoming unemployed received grants on a par with unemployment benefits, enabling them to attend training courses. It was also a fundamental principle of Swedish higher education that all needy students should receive financial assistance if they met certain requirements.

37. The Educational Leave Act of 1975 also entitled any employee who had been working for the same employer for the previous 6 months or for a total of 12 months in the previous 2 years to a leave of absence for studies that had to be pursued during working hours. Adult education as well was organized on a highly flexible basis to improve access: there were full-time or part-time studies, and basic adult education could be combined with other studies such as vocational education at the upper secondary level. Evening and part-time courses were also offered for any students who had regular jobs.

38. Mr. Alston resumed the Chair.

39. Mr. SIMMA asked whether it was fair to compare teachers' salaries to the salaries of civil servants lumped together as a group regardless of level, and whether it would not have been more accurate to compare a teacher's income with that of, say, a minister. According to information from a non-governmental organization, the 1990 average income in Sweden was SKr 18,240, and he wondered if that meant that municipal employees earned less than the national average.

40. On another matter altogether, he asked whether the delegation knew anything about the circumstances of the dismissal for poor performance of a specific law professor in Sweden, about whom the Dean of the Law Faculty at the University of Stockholm had written him. He would be interested in knowing what power a university or the Ministry of Education had to dismiss a university professor, and for what causes, and whether professors were employed for life.

41. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked for clarification as to why the number of pupils in school was increasing even though the birth rate had not risen. That would be counter to the trend in the rest of Europe where the school population was declining as well. She also would like to know what proportion of women were studying in different fields, such as the technical fields.

42. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden) said that in Sweden, income in the private sector was generally much higher than in the public sector, and that differences between income levels in the public sector were only slight, so that the comparison to civil servants as a group was not unfair.

43. Regarding the Professor of International Law at the University of Stockholm who had been dismissed, that was a very special case in which the Board of Regents had decided to dismiss a colleague on apparently justifiable grounds. The courts had upheld the decision, but it was being appealed in the Supreme Court. The Ministry of Education itself had no power to dismiss professors, who were usually appointed for life until retirement.

44. He explained that class sizes had increased, not the total number of students in relation to the population curves.

45. Mr. LAGERGEN (Sweden), reverting to Mr. Simma's question on salaries, pointed out that only average values were given in the report. Professional people in the lower grades, such as auxiliaries, assistants providing care for the elderly and so forth, constituted the bulk of municipal employees. County council employees included doctors as well as people on lower salaries such as nurses and nursing auxiliaries. People in the lower grades were better paid in the public sector than their counterparts in the private sector, but higher up the scale, people were better paid in the private sector. Industrial workers in Sweden earned on average SKr 13,000 to 14,000.

46. Mr. AHMED said that while his question on religious education earlier in the day had received a satisfactory answer, an answer had not been given to the Committee's later questions, namely, whether or not the Swedish Government, by obliging students to take religious studies against their will, was infringing the religious freedom of those students, and whether human rights were taught in Swedish educational and other institutions.

47. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden), replying to Mrs. Jimenez Butragueño, said that the pattern of choice in higher education was still much the same as before, despite the efforts by the Government and education authorities to encourage women to take up work traditionally performed by men, and vice versa. The number of female students particularly in the technical universities and institutes was very low, and the traditional patterns seemed difficult to break.

48. Sweden did not consider compulsory religious studies at upper secondary level to be an infringement of religious freedom: the curricula were very general in nature, encompassed different religions, both Christian and other world religions, as well as their historical, institutional, cultural and ethical perspectives.

49. There was a general stipulation that human rights should be included at all levels of education in Sweden, and they were taught throughout the educational system.

50. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO asked whether human rights education was also included in specialized curricula such as those of the police, armed forces and other occupations for which the study of human rights was appropriate.

51. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden) said that human rights were taught to a much greater extent in specialized institutions, especially those of the police, prison personnel and for people working in the justice system, and the United Nations guidelines were followed. Sweden was particularly active internationally in the area of human rights and endeavoured to do its utmost at the national level also by informing everyone through the system about the human rights of the individual and ways in which those rights could be taken care of, as well as how complaints should be made when rights were not respected.

52. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Swedish delegation to respond to issues Nos. 47 to 52 of the list of issues (E/C.12/1994/WP.18), relating to article 15 of the Covenant.

53. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden), replying to issue No. 47, said that in order to counteract the negative effects of commercialism in the cultural sector, some new forms of support had been developed in the late 1970s and 1980s for literature, cultural periodicals and phonograms. Previously, trade support had extended only to the film sector.

54. The disadvantaged groups for whom special policy measures were needed, were children, disabled people, persons in institutional care, ethnic groups and people in sparsely populated areas. The National Council for Cultural Affairs contributed each year to a number of projects, such as the Silent Theatre which used sign language, mime and pantomime, and the Cassette Book and Braille Library, which produced and lent "talking" and Braille books to other libraries and institutions. The State also supported cassette versions of newspapers and many municipalities had local cassette magazines.

55. Turning to issue No. 48, he said that three commissions, composed of members of Parliament, had investigated the area of theatres, museums and international contacts. A fourth parliamentary commission was studying the results and would make proposals based on an evaluation of the situation since the 1974 decision.

56. The status of the Sami people as a special ethnic group had been confirmed by a parliamentary resolution in 1977. Since that time, special appropriations had been made for Sami culture and Sami organizations. The Sametina, the Sami Parliamentary Assembly, was responsible for the distribution of funds.

57. The State budget contained annual appropriations for immigrant culture. Grants were also available from various general support funds, for example, for cultural magazines, theatre and music groups and cultural festivals.

58. Cultural activities for children and young people were given high priority. The National Council for Cultural Affairs had been given the task of carrying out a programme of action to increase the participation of children and young people in cultural life.

59. Since the early 1980s, there had been public support for a decentralized cultural life. Financial support was given to regional and local cultural institutions. The National Touring Theatre, National Touring Concerts and National Touring Exhibitions also received grants.

60. Moving on to issue No. 49, he said that the National Council for Cultural Affairs made annual contributions to a number of projects with the aim of encouraging the participation of the elderly in cultural life. Theatres, museums and cinemas usually offered reduced entrance rates for senior citizens. Special cultural and other programmes and activities for pensioners and elderly people in service houses and homes were also organized. Many

elderly people were active members of associations and societies, such as educational associations, local folklore societies and genealogical research clubs.

61. With regard to issue No. 50, he noted that the Constitution stipulated that authors, artists and photographers should own the rights to their work in accordance with the provisions laid down in law (chap. 2, art. 19 of the Instrument of Government). According to the Copyright Act, authors, composers, photographers and other creators of literary and artistic work had certain sole rights to their production. Those rights normally lasted for 50 years after the death of the creator, but a government bill had recently proposed that that time-limit should be extended to 70 years. The Copyright Act also contained so-called closely related rights for creative artists, such performers, musicians and singers.

62. Turning to issue No. 51, he said that computer programmes had long been protected under the copyright rules. Programmes were protected against copying and also against adaptation without the authorization of the holder of the right.

63. With regard to issue No. 52, he said that it was official policy that Swedish cultural life abroad should manifest itself primarily through cultural institutions in other countries. The Swedish Cultural Centre in Paris was an exception to that rule. A future cultural centre in St. Petersburg was currently under discussion, but no decision had yet been taken.

64. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO, referring to issue No. 49, asked whether the elderly participated actively in cultural life and whether there were any associations for elderly people. A National Council for the Elderly had recently been created in Spain which would have much influence on policy formulation. Were any NGOs concerned in such activity, and were there any relations with international bodies?

65. Mr. LINDHOLM (Sweden) said that apart from their growing individual participation in cultural life, the elderly participated in NGOs and many other cultural and educational groups and institutes. They also participated in trade unions and political parties. Special groups had been set up to defend their interests at the local level, and political parties, albeit small ones, had been set up with the aim of representing senior citizens. The elderly also had their own educational associations. A more complete picture could be given in written form at a later stage if the Committee so wished.

66. Replying to questions raised on the previous day, he said that while violence was rare, there had been a number of incidents involving violence between Swedish citizens and immigrants in 1994 and 1995. The problem was a difficult one and the authorities were working hard to strengthen long-term and short-term measures to prevent violence. Changes in the Penal Code had entered into force in July 1994, whereby crimes committed on racist grounds carried harsher penalties. Efforts were being made throughout the country to improve the integration of immigrants in order to reduce violence between groups.

67. No statistics were available on illegal immigrants because illegal immigration was a very limited problem in Sweden. For various reasons as had been explained the previous day, it was very difficult to live illegally in the country.

68. Sweden had very few migrant workers, issuing approximately 200 permits each year, and no tradition of guest workers. The deportation of migrant workers was not an issue, as deportation depended on a court decision in connection with a crime and had nothing to do with immigration.

69. It was difficult to identify what had been meant in the report as supplementary measures for immigrants. It might refer to the policy of integration for refugees and immigrants, which was part of the general welfare policy in Sweden and was complemented by special measures linked more directly to immigrants and refugees. In the absence of more positive information, it might be better to delete the sentence from the report.

70. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee had concluded its consideration of Sweden's report. Its concluding observations would be released on the last day of its session, 19 May 1995. He thanked the delegation of Sweden for its cooperation with the Committee and for all the information it had provided.

The public part of the meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.